05

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editor's note

We have grown accustomed to the riots, hatred, and violence that fill the streets everyday. New events that are discussed and given attention to keep on coming—from cheap affairs of celebrities, the rotten political scandals, to terroristic atrocities.

And we perceive such events as some sort of "turbulence." A disturbing anomaly to our supposedly ordinary, normal, and organized daily life that we choose to view from a distance while taking cover behind the comforting walls of our homes, offices, and Facebook—where the familiar and the ordinary take place.

But perhaps it is the familiar and the ordinary that we should be wary about: that it is within the things deeply attached to us we would find hard to question. Almost unquestionable, because we choose only to see what we want to see, we only hear what others want to hear as well.

To confront means to realize that what we do not see is more crucial; to experience something equals not experiencing it through different lenses. We are stuck in familiarity and numbed in our effortless acceptance of everything that surrounds us.

But the real question that lurks beneath it all: Are we used to getting numbed too much that there is no other way anymore than to accept it? And if all hopes are lost, can we still embrace it while still have the guts to bleed our senses over and over again?

FAMILIAR SCENES

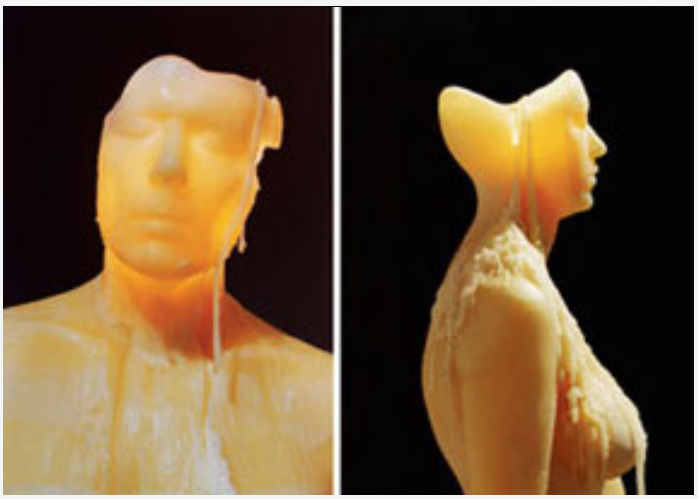
Crafted laughter echoes in a room full of eyes
glued to the lonely clock
hanging on the plain wall.

When are they going to end? The niceties that come with crooked smiles. Or the empty praise that,
like spit,
lands on an arm or a perfect eyebrow, but isn't wiped off because politeness is absolutely more important than the quiet pride offered by a piece of tissue paper. When are they going to end? The awkward dances, the awkward jokes, the awkward glances at
every
person
who
enters
the
room.

Nobody wants to be here, yet nobody dares to be elsewhere. So when is this going to end?
Time is moving slowly, so slowly that the conversations get stretched out like rubber
extending without meaning—
just words thrown together to fill the space between acquaintances who have forgotten
each other's names.

When are they going to stop pretending to care about the opinion of a stranger whose ideas of freedom never go beyond stale metaphors of cages and chains? Courteous nods of approval won't help a misguided idealist posing as a lone revolutionary achieve hypothetical goals.

None of them are fooling anyone,
except the fools who don't know how much they need to end this,
the fools who still haven't noticed that the clock has already stopped ticking.



THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A SUNDAE

On one fine morning, a man tells his daughter,
"Do not think about vanilla ice cream with
rainbow sprinkles and pink strawberry syrup on top"
—a suggestion he found from a book full of living secrets

(But the mental image of the ice cream with its sprinkles and pinky syrup will still be there no matter how hard the child tries not to think about it)

That's how the mantras and the formulas of Success go about
Its creamy aphorism and the life-fulfilling secrets
You can always find them in the bookstores
And as a bedtime story before the waking dream

Telling us instructions how to dream our ass out into Success
Take some therapies
Be more like the 500 fortunate bunch
And make it my business to be in the business

Funny we don't realize how Darwinian all that is
Restaurants come and go
New ones built upon the empty stores
Good thing the consumer always benefits from the graveyards of Success!
Good thing we always forget about the graveyard itself

And of course the child,
She wants to have all those bags of goods
And ice creams
Especially the one she's not supposed to think about

But what about the living dead?

The dying names she has never heard
The victims of the victims
(Because aren't we all but one?)

Too many she can't escape from

Try not to think about it

Even the most personal a space a child can have
Can't escape from it
She was named after a financial derivative
How can a child be richer than that?
She was born into a promising investment returns!

The problem is when you realize
That you're *long* on the child
But she's *short* on Life

But try not to think about it

Because what can she do? What can anyone do?
Now that the ice cream has melted into anything else
Don't think about anything else—
Don't think about anything else—

Just convince her to repeat the mantra
Keep the formula as it is
And maybe, just, maybe

She'll think about it.

Such Mean Estate (2015), Ryan Spencer, Powerhouse Books

DI UJUNG WAKTU, PADA AKHIRNYA MEMBISU

langit hari ini terlihat indah saat terbakar
angin gelap berhembus santai tanpa beban
mata pena ini sudah berkarat
dan kertas ini telah usang
terlalu lama menunggu
untuk dilimpahi amarah
yang telah lama bertengger
di ujung tenggorokan

perputaran dunia
tidak mengizinkanku mati terlalu cepat
ia ingin aku menderita
tidur terjaga
menyaksikan langit terbakar
bumi memuntahkan isinya
dan penghuninya menelan paksa tinja berbalut aditif
berwarna merah dan putih

luapan emosiku adalah pancaran tidak menyenangkan
bagi teriakan omong kosong oleh barisan menyedihkan
yang menghamba pada buku suci dan tradisi
dengan semangat berkobar a la pasukan berani mati

yang bisa kulakukan sekarang
hanyalah mengamati
dan mengkaji
membiarkan paru-paru disesaki
oleh semerbak bau bangkai burung Garuda berkalung sorban
yang mereka bela mati-matian
untuk dibangkitkan kembali

A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence (2014),
dir. Roy Andersson

TENTANG KESEHARIAN II

Lihatlah semut yang sedang mengelilingi jemarimu. Mungkin perjalanannya sudah terlalu jauh, hingga yang dia lakukan hanya berputar di atas telapakmu. Mungkin dia tak sadar dan lupa, dari mana dia berangkat, bagaimana perjalanannya, atau mengapa akhirnya ia sampai ke sini.

Semut ini tak sendirian, kita (ya, aku dan kamu) kenal benar rasanya berjalan-jalan hingga rumah tak lagi menyembul di pojok mata (setidaknya dalam kepala masing-masing). Dengan atau tanpa alasan kita memulai perjalanan ini. Mungkin kita ingin menambal keseharian yang datar, menginterupsi seringai jam dinding, mendistorsi perspektif hingga dunia terasa baik-baik saja. Kita sudah bebal ditemui kebosanan, cukup, tak lagi-lagi, dia tak diterima di sini. Pada mulanya adalah rasa ingin tahu. Seingatku, penasaran adalah bahan bakar utama perjalanan ini, mungkin hingga kita lelah dan merasa tak bisa lagi menoleh (nanti). Tentu ini sebuah pemberontakan masa muda, atau setidaknya upaya untuk tak terjebak di kehidupan yang repetitif; apa pun alasannya, titik awal perjalanan ini sungguh menyenangkan.

Pintu kemungkinan yang dulu terasa tak mungkin terjamah pelan-pelan terbuka lebar. Krisis dan sengkarut keseharian yang tadinya melelahkan perlahan berubah menjadi baik-baik saja. Perbincangan dan opini terasa segar, interaksi antarmanusia jadi menarik. Realita tak lagi terbagi-bagi, akhirnya, kita dapat menikmati mengurut benang-benang penghubung di antaranya.

Hingga satu titik di mana kita merasa perjalanan ini mengubah kita menjadi lebih manusiawi. Perlahan kita mampu melompati realita dan sukarela menjalani keseharian, tak ada yang berat pula memusingkan, tepatnya tak perlu dipikirkan. Lagi pula perjalanan ini memipihkan kesadaran kita, membuatnya lentur, kemudian sanggup menyerap realita via lensa yang ramah. Kita juga mampu menggali kegiatan repetitif, menemukan kenyataan. Siomay yang biasanya kita acuhkan, mendadak jadi hidangan sedap.

Perjalanan ini juga bercabang-cabang. Bukan seperti jalan lain yang hanya memiliki beberapa area istirahat dan tujuan, cabang jalan dalam perjalanan ini sangat mungkin menimbulkan cabang baru. Bisa saja kita menemui pelajaran bijak (semu) tentang kehidupan, mengunjungi tepi kesadaran, mampu membatu hingga realita terasa jinak atau membangun interaksi manusiawi pada karibmu.

Dari sana, perjalanan makin ringan. Menyenangkan. Terlalu penting untuk dilewati begitu saja, pikir kita. Bila mungkin, kita enggan sejenak menepi dari perjalanan ini. Untuk berpikir sejenak dan menghitung langkah, sudah seberapa jauh kah kita? Kita sudah jadi manusia macam apa? Tak perlu berhenti sekarang, momen sudah terlanjur bergulir. Naga itu sedikit lagi tercapai genggaman.

Kita merasa seperti manusia, tapi manusia lain terasa tak menyenangkan. Pertemanan kita kerdilkan jadi sekedar relasi ekonomi. Apa yang aku bisa peroleh darinya? Ruang? Waktu? Akses? Peduli setan tentang masalah mereka, seharusnya yang memilih perjalanan ini bisa mengurusi masalahnya sendiri. Belum lagi kita harus tidur memeluk gunting, setengah terjaga, jangan sampai di tengah perjalanan sulur hukum menjerat kita.

Perjalanan ini akhirnya menjadi satu-satunya arah yang kita tapaki. Cabang-cabangnya membuat keseharian semakin berjarak dan kita lambat laun menikmati jarak ini. Buat apa mencerna realita ketika kita bisa memandanginya dari jauh? Tempat ini ramah bagi kita, karena di sana kita bisa menjadi penonton setia. Biarkan lebah-lebah itu berseliweran, toh tak ada yang menyengatmu.

Perjalanan ini menjadi totalitas hidupmu. Proyek ini adalah muara pilihan dan perilaku kita sehari-hari. Terlalu nyaman dengan jarak yang hadir, realita tak lagi menarik untuk dicerna. Hambar dan mudah diterka. Lebih baik jika kita teruskan saja perjalanan ini, toh lubangnya masih panjang. Hingga tanpa disadari, mati rasa senang hati merangkul kita.

Dengan kulit yang menebal dan indra tertutup rapat, kita sukarela terus menerus berada dalam kekosongan. Mungkin kamu ingat cabang perjalanan ini, rasanya familiar, seperti selimut di atas kasur atau dinding putih yang menatapnya. Di ruang itu kesadaran kita tak lagi pipih, jangankan kesadaran, berfungsi pun sulit. Pikiran kita digerakkan impuls-impuls sementara, kebanyakan soal meneruskan perjalanan, walau kita tau hal itu tak lagi menyenangkan.

Perjalanan ini memangkas waktu dan mengerutkan ruang. Sudah berapa lama kita berada di perjalanan ini? Sudah sampai mana kita? Sudah berapa banyak kenyataan yang kita tolak masuk? Lebih penting lagi, apakah perjalanan ini membuat kita lebih manusiawi? Atau justru membuat kita hanya nyaman mengambang?

Tak ada yang tahu jawabannya, mencarinya terlalu melelahkan, pula menginterupsi perjalanan ini. Lensa kanta yang tadinya membantu kita mencerna realita, sudah tertinggal di cabang entah yang mana. Kesadaran ekspansif itu kini tinggal menyisakan arogansi dan kebebalan. Interaksi kita dengan manusia lain kini hanya sekedarnya, hanya memastikan kita belum wafat. Bila mereka ingin menumpang perjalanan kita, silahkan, tapi tak usah terlalu lama.

Semua interaksi kita berada dalam pancang-pancang perjalanan kita. Hampir semua relasi sosial kita terasa tak penting, tak relevan tepatnya, bila tak berhubungan dengan perjalanan ini. Menjadi manusia menjadi urusan belakangan, yang utama adalah meneruskan perjalanan. Kemudian lingkar-lingkar pun pecah, mengerut hingga kita tak lagi dapat mempercayai siapa-siapa.

Menyisakan kita, berjalan sendiri, yakin tak bisa memutar arah. Lagi pula perjalanan ini jauh lebih baik dari pada realita, seburuk apa pun itu. Jarak itu meyakinkan kita, bahwa hanya ada satu perjalanan

yang sanggup kita tempuh. Sampai akhirnya kita tak lagi yakin bisa meneruskan perjalanan ini, perlahan akhirnya kita menoleh. Rumah tak lagi terlihat, kita berpisah karena jarak. Pada saat ini aku mengamati sekeliling, aku bahkan tak lagi mengenali tempat ini. Tersesat tanpa pernah ke mana-mana.

Jemariku masih dikelilingi si semut. Aku baru menyadari beberapa semut sedang melubangi lumbung sinsemilla milikku. Dengan sigap kuusir semut-semut itu. Tak lama kemudian, seseorang menepuk tanganku.

"Kita mau ke mana sih?"

"Bandara kan?" kataku.

"Oh iya, kok enggak *nyampe-nyampe*?"

Dia kembali menatap ke depan, meluruskan setirnya, menyulut gorilanya.

Perjalanan ini belum pernah berakhir.

Curious Alice (1971), dir. The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

MOVING HOUSES

"John Stuart Mill declared that tyranny makes men cynical. He did not know that a Republic makes them silent."
— Lu Xun, Selected Works (p. 356)

Our houses are packed so close—
they are no longer houses. Weird as it is.
Like a moving train without rail tracks, they lived beyond
our wildest imagination—a nightmarish picture at best;
no gardens, no somersaults in the mud, only sterilized boredom
These are our beds, our rations of food on fancy plates, on the
face of our palms, utilities and germs—but we will be fine
We eat with the same mouth. We no longer use our bones.
Our bodies melted into one, skin is no longer skin, they are the sunsets
possibilities without borders, beautiful and enchanting
We are desperate and we are fabulous,
we are possibly dead, and free.

Three in the morning. Could not pay the rent.
Eat, sleep, fuck, the internet or get high, repeat
whatever makes us feel more miserable and lonely
and that monster hovering in the sky still taking our details
Ghosts walk at noon. Everyone is a weapon.

There is no more time to waste. Our houses—
concealed, like songs that mumble to themselves—soundproofed
Whatever happens in the house, stays in the house
domestication as a mean to gain private interests
and family as a mean to prolong feudal domination. Perfection
has no place in love, and rebellion is always fruitful and it is ripe.
Now is the perfect time to rise and break the spell
The poetry of Tagore, such clarity is unique
The night we see is clear—the darkest ink from a poet's hand
The stars we see are not stars, the city sounds not city sounds.
The sirens, the police, the battle-cry of quasi-religious fundamentalists
that howl through every corner of the streets, however,
they are as real as algebra; their swarming teeth are real like
Lazarus who never even lived through the 21st century, and like a plague
or like a loved one's shadow that is haunting us and—
here I am alone, but nothing is sad. Only meanings.

As I was ranting to my friends, I kept holding on to
the scream, that contains all that is meaningful in the word 'communism'—
or rather, what people like us mean when we use that word
post '65, which is, as we all know, perhaps all too well,
somewhat different to whatever it is the dictionary of the visible world
likes to *pretend* it means
But we do not want to forget. Let us all have a drink with the unemployed.
Let's not go on about our health now, insanity is all that we have left
Sunbathing, smoke joints, take pills and shit profusely, let's destroy each other
All these four cardinal points, they are getting more visible day by day
The sky, the place where they have buried us;
The earth, where they question us. The silent mark.
And the rest were recently taken out of commission
They kick us out from the house
They kick us out from everywhere
No explanations were offered.

But do not fear, comrades.

We will abandon our history or steal it
We will set up borders around that history
We will drive up the rents on that history, and talk about the old days
in meters and rhymes, while the pigs close the borders
—*we will* be those borders.
To confuse those borders with songs
and sit inside those songs as if they were the scars on our veins
Our scars will become a lullaby and we will turn into dogs.

—(*Ugh*) This is me puking in Trans Jakarta, there is no rainbow
these brothers and sisters, fellow travelers, comrades in thoughts and arms
they all told me to go on. We know it is not possible. Not even remotely.
The toxicity and the audibility is irresistible, radicalism as a form of self-reassurance
about this weird silence I live inside for almost my whole life, uninterrupted
right in the middle of the deafening din of this city: the city
I have convinced myself throughout; the city *I might have come to love*.

We are whatever our potentialities, we are not completely defenceless
as we are not yet consumed by fire, hope you do not mind:
I am no one, I have no name and I have been dead
for all my life. You can buy my clothes for a bargain
if you like, in the vintage stores in Pasar Santa, in the
chaotic exchange of commodities, in the renovated houses or apartments
You will find them, oh, yes you will, and you will paint it red
all of my senses, enraged, form cracks
the houses I sleep in, are no longer there,
like the void between Buddhist's ear
It somehow liberates me
I feel so liberated I start writing about the republic of masks
and democracy of mimes. The necessity of apples which have not yet
become bombs, and walls which have not yet been riddled by bullet holes

Sanrizuka: Peasant of the Second Fortress (1971), dir. Shinsuke Ogawa

AN INVISIBLE ALLIANCE

Real resistance sometimes arises from tender places. And we fought the good fight whenever it staggered down our lonesome, twisted roads. There is no excuse for us to not rethink what we—or, what those who came before us—have already achieved.

What has been established is not a mere order to which we fasten our lives, but more or less, its contrary has now become true: we have become so equipped and well-versed to handling crisis and disorder, that they are in fact all we know; the Agambenian logic of the empire: we have become so accustomed to crisis, that we no longer try to change, that is—only able to respond, to contain and diffuse it. What has kept us from having anything important to do at all in this post-Soeharto era, is our tireless loyalty (a misplaced one, that is) in mending what is already beyond repair. Like people suffering from acute OCD, we keep committing the same mistakes, over and over again, even more meticulously than before. There is no way out of this mess, that we so instinctively throw ourselves deeper into, other than the creation of a new mess of sorts. A whole new situation.

Forty-plus years of "crisis," poverty, mass unemployment, corruption, intolerance, threats of fascism, all at flagging growth, and they still want us to believe in the economy? They made us believe that the economy is not "in" crisis, or, is in crisis "as per usual", but we failed to recognize that the economy itself "is" the crisis. It is contradictory and problematic in essence. And yet, we already "got used" to the economy.

"What else can we do?" To ask such question is also a form cowardice, if not a betrayal.

For generations, we were disciplined, pacified and made into *subjects*: productive by nature and always content to consume. Commodification and cooptation. Capitalism got as much as it could from undoing all the old social ties (by means of alienation and estrangement) and it is now in the process of remaking itself by rebuilding these same ties on its own terms by force and violent assimilation. Every new strategies, every cultural revolution, every bloody and successful counter-revolutionary *coup*, has got nothing compared to this new model of exploitation. More deadly and infectious, more subtle and complete.

Now the message is clear: *total integration*.

All these talks about eco-cities, surveillance cameras, infrastructures, (bio) technologies, spirituality and sociability, all belong to the same civilizational paradigm that is now already taking shape, that of the total economy rebuilt from the ground up.

Let there be no mistakes: the global neo-liberal project is nearing its end. Or if end is only an abstraction, it is a start. Paralelling this collapse is the tearing of the social fabric that holds together contemporary civilization; one only need to read the latest news headlines to see this fact.

The world stage is set. It has become firm. Whether for disaster or insurrection, it has yet to be determined. And it is up for us to decide. *Que se vayan todos*!

GOD IS DEAD

this text conveys some meaning
but that's where it ceases

to

make meaning